

VZCZCXYZ0002
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #1601/01 3170931
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 120931Z NOV 08
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0357
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8734
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0181

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 001601

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS, U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN
RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their November 11-12 news coverage on former President Chen Shui-bian, who was handcuffed and taken into court Tuesday night as prosecutors sought his detention on alleged corruption and embezzlement charges; and on the students staging sit-ins island-wide demanding that the government amend the Assembly and Parade Law. Nearly all papers reported that the annual U.S.-Taiwan Trade and Investment Framework Agreements talks scheduled for November have been delayed, because the U.S. has set comprehensive imports of U.S. beef to Taiwan as its top priority before all other trade and economic issues. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" ran a news story on page ten with the headline "The United States Places Pressure [and Demands That] All [U.S.] Beef [and Beef Products] Be Exported to Taiwan; Department of Health Will Not Yield."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed piece in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" criticized the Ma Ying-jeou administration for giving in too much by signing the four agreements with China's Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait. An editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News," on the other hand, said the opening of the three links across the Taiwan Strait indicated that from now on, Taiwan can only adopt the political line of the "Republic of China" and that there is no way for the island to realize the dream of becoming the "Republic of Taiwan." With regard to U.S.-China-Taiwan relations, an editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" said "unless the Obama administration clearly states that the U.S. remains committed to defending Taiwan, Beijing could reach the conclusion that the time is ripe for a takeover, especially with Taiwan disunited, disorganized and dispirited." An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" also urged U.S. president-elect Barack Obama to "seriously consider the importance of the principle of 'democratic resolution' in the process of current cross-Strait relations between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan in the formulation of his Asian policy." End summary.

¶3. Cross-Strait Relations

A) "Too High Are the Political Prices for the Four [Cross-Strait] Agreements"

Tung Chen-yuan, associate professor at the Graduate Institute of Development Studies, National Chengchi University, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (11/12):

"... Ever since May 20, the Chinese government has constantly used economic opening across the Taiwan Strait and cross-Strait talks as bait to conduct political maneuvering over the Ma Ying-jeou administration, forcing the latter to make concessions on Taiwan's sovereignty. The Ma administration, on the other hand, has fallen nearly unconsciously into the traps set by China and it has no bargaining chips to strike back at China. If Beijing really believes that opening Taiwan to the Chinese tourists will benefit the Taiwan people, why does it only allow 200 Chinese tourists to come to Taiwan a day as of now -- a far cry from the 3,000 people

targeted by the cross-Straight agreement? President Ma has acknowledged that the problem lies with Beijing, which was willing to act in concert [with Taiwan's request]. Even now, [Beijing has been trying to] cut corners with regard to the agreement reached by both sides on direct transportation and chartered flights. Is it because China does not want to meet Taiwan's needs until the Ma Administration makes more political concessions? The Ma administration should be vigilant in not devouring the bait and thus ruin Taiwan's future."

B) "'Three Links' and Their Impact on the 'Republic of Taiwan'"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (11/12):

"... The three links [across the Taiwan Strait] are essential to Taiwan's economic lifeline, and they are vital for Taiwan's plan to develop itself into a regional platform or regional hub. But the political effect brought about by the three links is that from now on, Taiwan can only adopt the political line of the 'Republic of China' -- namely, there is no way for Taiwan to realize [its hope of becoming] the 'Republic of Taiwan.' ...

"When entering the era of direct transportation and three links, it is also the time for the 'Republic of Taiwan' to reflect on [the line it adopts]. The DPP must return to the coordination of the 'Republic of China' to demarcate its national identity and cross-Straight policy. If it continues to remain on the coordination of the 'Republic of Taiwan' and demarcate its national identity and cross-Straight policy accordingly, what it does, no matter whether it decides to debate the policy in the Legislative Yuan or simply take to the streets to protest, will only split Taiwan, grieving the Taiwan people while gratifying the enemy. [China's Association for RELATIONS

Relations across the Taiwan Strait Chairman] Chen Yunlin's visit to Taiwan has tactfully replaced 'peaceful unification' with 'peaceful development' without leaving any trace [of the former]. The DPP should therefore return to the path of the 'Republic of China' from that of the 'Republic of Taiwan.'

14. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "The Greatest Threat Is Yet to Come"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (11/11):

"Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) Chairman Chen Yunlin was the model of professionalism during his visit to Taiwan last week. With his smiles, toasts, gifts and handshakes, he presented to Taiwan - and for those who were watching elsewhere - the facade that Chinese Communist Party (CCP) technocrats have long cultivated. As many China watchers have observed, CCP cadres are increasingly charismatic and professional, driven less by doctrine and more by political calculation. Part of this strategy has been to reassure the region and the world about China's intentions as it grows in power and influence - and to their credit, Beijing's diplomats have been extremely successful in this regard. ...

"Beijing's ability to hide its true intentions and to beguile the KMT should not be underestimated. Like a snake charmer, the CCP appears to have had the KMT government in its thrall since day one. Outmatched by the CCP, the bungling administration of President Ma Ying-jeou may, to be fair, have failed to comprehend how divisive and disruptive Chen's visit would be. But Beijing didn't. It knew full well what would happen and, relying on Niccolò Machiavelli's old military trick, used the KMT to drive a wedge within the Taiwanese polity. The plan worked to perfection, with Taiwanese turning against Taiwanese in recrimination. A greater pan-green versus pan-blue divide has emerged, with other factions seeking to distance themselves from the main parties, while the gap between the government and the governed, the police and the policed, has widened. Unable to present a united front, Taiwan has been weakened.

"The second leg of China's plan played out not in Asia, but in the US, with the election of Senator Barack Obama. While the

president-elect has yet to prove his mettle, already there is widespread concern that he will not be as good a friend to Taiwan as other presidents have been. Whether or not this is true, it is likely that Beijing will reach that conclusion and do everything it can - through charm, again - to ensure that Obama stays on its side. Unless the Obama administration clearly states that the US remains committed to defending Taiwan, Beijing could reach the conclusion that the time is ripe for a takeover, especially with Taiwan disunited, disorganized and dispirited."

B) "Obama Must Develop His Taiwan Policy"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (11/11):

"After his dramatic victory last Tuesday, we urge United States president-elect Barack Obama of the Democratic Party to seriously consider the importance of the principle of "democratic resolution" in the process of current cross-strait relations between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan in the formulation of his Asian policy. ... So far, Obama's foreign policy advisers, in line with the basic policy basis of the last seven U.S. administrations, have suggested that "both sides of the Taiwan Strait" should "peacefully" resolve disputes through dialogue and have lauded what they see as Ma's efforts to stabilize cross-strait relations since he took office May 20.

"But last week's demonstrations show that decision-makers in a "Democratic" administration should not narrowly see cross-strait affairs as a matter of "reconciliation" between the KMT and the CCP elites, but as a vital affair that concerns Taiwan's future and the democratic rights of Taiwan's 23 million people whom decidedly cannot be represented by the KMT alone. Besides upholding the 'peaceful resolution' of cross-strait disputes, it is no less essential to insist on 'democratic resolution' or what former president Bill Clinton referred to in March 2000 as the 'asset of the Taiwan people.' It is precisely the exclusion of 'democratic resolution' in the KMT-CCP 'reconciliation' that sparked the massive demonstrations on Aug. 30, Oct. 25 and Nov. 6 and the spontaneous 'siege' activities against Chen. The bottom line that Obama should uphold to both the KMT and the PRC is that a democratic America does not want greater cross-strait cooperation to come at the expense of Taiwan's democracy and human rights and that the democratic assent of the Taiwan people is absolutely necessary for lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait."

RELATIONS

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